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Brooke F Adams 08/06/2006 03:26:20 PM From DB/Inbox: Brooke F Adams

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Text:

UNCLAS TRIPOLI 00383

SIPDIS
CXCAIRO:

ACTION: POL
INFO: RSO PA ORA OMC LEGAT IPS ECON DEA DCM DAO CONS
AMB AID

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

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PP RUEHEG
DE RUEHTRO #0383/01 2131547
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 011547Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1061
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 1190

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000383

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [LY](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF LIBYA ANNOUNCES EFFORTS TO SUPPORT LEBANON
REF: TRIPOLI 377

¶1. (SBU) Summary and Comment. The Government of Libya announced on Monday a three-step initiative to express its solidarity with the people of Lebanon and denounce Israeli attacks in the country. 1) The General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation was instructed to hold a meeting with ambassadors from the P-5 countries Monday, calling for an immediate ceasefire and an investigation into alleged genocide against the people of Lebanon (reftel). 2) A Libyan-government sponsored daily cargo plane stocked with medical supplies and food will reportedly be sent to Lebanon via other Arab countries. 3) Local media are being asked to highlight the confrontation, and have been particularly praising leader Moammar Qaddafi's alleged prediction of the attacks during a speech ten years ago. Several relatively calm government-sanctioned demonstrations have taken place in Tripoli. Comment: The three-step initiative is clearly a low-cost attempt by the Libyan government to counter criticism it is facing on opposition websites and elsewhere, that it is not doing enough for the cause in Lebanon. End Summary and Comment.

¶2. (SBU) On Sunday, July 30, the General People's Committee (GPC - i.e. the Cabinet) held an emergency session to "support the steadfastness of the Lebanese brotherly people in facing the Israeli barbarous aggression taking place these days." After the meeting, the GPC ordered three steps to put these words into action, conveying to the Libyan public their commitment to supporting the Lebanese people. In carrying out the first step, the GPC for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation (GPCFLIC, i.e. the MFA) called in the ambassadors from the P-5 countries to insist on an immediate stop to attacks in Lebanon (reftel). Television and newspapers highlighted the Charges d'affairs from the United States and China, along with ambassadors from Russia, Britain and France, meeting with GPCFLIC Secretary for European Affairs Obeidi, who in press accounts, called for an end to "state terrorism, unwarranted aggression, and war crime against the Lebanese people and genocide that require an international investigation." (See

Reftel for a full report on the actual content of the meeting and Charge's response.)

3 (SBU) The second announced step is the commencement of an immediate "air bridge" between Libya and Lebanon to transport food and medical supplies via Jordan, Syria, and Cyprus. On Monday evening, local media reported that the first cargo plane of the air bridge, carrying 50 tons of medicine, medical equipment, food stuffs, and ambulances, took off from Mitiga International Airport. Daily relief flights are planned. The government also reported that Libyan medical teams are available to be deployed to Lebanon, and that injured Lebanese civilians are welcome for treatment in local hospitals. According to local media sources last week, the Qaddafi Foundation for Charity Societies, a quasi-NGO run by Qaddafi's son Seif Al-Islam, in conjunction with Libyan Red Crescent, announced separate plans to send air shipments of medical and health supplies to Lebanon.

14. (SBU) The GPC also announced that the state-run Libyan media has been called upon to "highlight the confrontation of the Lebanese people in face of the Israeli barbarous and brutal attacks and the war crimes committed against the people of Lebanon." As in many newspapers in the region, the front page of all the daily newspapers report almost solely on the violence in Lebanon, many showing graphic photographs of dead Lebanese civilians, especially following the attacks in Qana. On the evening of the July 30 bombing in Qana, the state run news show highlighted leader Moammar Qaddafi "predicting" the attack in a May 1996 speech in which he said the April, 1996 "Grapes of Wrath" attack on Qana would not be the last. The station rebroadcast a clip of Qaddafi addressing an audience in Kano, Nigeria on May 9th, 1996, in which the leader encouraged people to wear t-shirts with pictures of children who had died in the attack Qana that year. "... look at this high training of the Israeli airmen to target and kill infants and children. Look at the disgrace and shame. The world must look at this little girl, this is a photo, and this is an example of the Israeli terrorism and barbarism". The media broadcaster commented that the world should have listened to Qaddafi at the time, who predicted this week's attack.

15. (SBU) Editorials in state run newspapers echoed highly critical statements against the government of Israel and the western powers that back it. In an article from "Azzahaf Al-Akhdar" from July 31, 2006 "The Zionist hegemony is beyond description and goes unpunished just because it enjoys the protection of Great Powers." In "Ashames" on the same day, in an editorial entitled "Qana Again!", the author condemned Arab countries' silence towards the attacks in Qana. He also referred to Qaddafi's speech in Kano, Nigeria in 1996 warning of an Israeli "death train." A great deal of coverage has been devoted to Saturday's "New York Times" article about the expedited delivery of US produced precision-guided bombs to Israel. As a result of this article, some here have started referring to Secretary Rice as "Hamalat al Khatab," or "carrier of fire", a Quranic reference to the wife of the uncle of prophet Muhammad, who was known to be an instigator or a fire starter.

16. (SBU) Several government sanctioned demonstrations have been held since the commencement of the violence in Lebanon and Israeli. This weekend, following Friday prayers, demonstrators gathered in Green Square, the traditional spot for protests, chanting anti-Israeli slogans. Friday's broadcast sermon on state-sponsored television mainly focused on criticizing Israel, Jews and other Arab leaders. The imam particularly criticized wealthy oil states, which "should have power, but also stand by and do nothing." A pointed criticism of the US was also made for blocking the UN Security Council's attempt at a cease fire. On Monday, July 31, a separate demonstration composed mostly of youth, organized by Aisha Qaddafi's Watasimo Charity Organization, also took place in Green Square. The demonstrators, many of whom were affiliated with the Libyan version of the Boy Scouts, marched to the UN headquarters in

Tripoli and delivered a letter condemning the attacks in Qana and praising the foresight of Moammar Qaddafi in forecasting this event years ago while in Kano, Nigeria. "Where is the UN? Where are its role, mission and charter called human rights? Where are the Security Council, and its resolutions regarding this terrible massacre?" Media reported approximately two thousand people took part in this demonstration, which was also televised extensively.

BERRY